



PRESS NOTICE

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February 29, 2012

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COLUMBIA MEN SENTENCED IN FOOD STAMP FRAUD CASE

Columbia, South Carolina ---- United States Attorney Bill Nettles stated today that Ulysses Williams, age 71, and Jamal Derwin Gaines, age 24, both of Columbia, were sentenced today in federal court in Columbia for participating in a Conspiracy to Commit Food Stamp Fraud, a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 371. United States District Judge Margaret B. Seymour sentenced Ulysses Williams to 41 months in jail and Jamal Gaines to five years probation. In addition, Williams is responsible for over \$2.3 million in restitution. Xavier Roedran Pinckney, age 38, and George Andrew Williams, age 47, who also participated in the conspiracy, will be sentenced at a later date.

Evidence presented at the change of plea hearing established that the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, or SNAP, otherwise known as the

food stamp program, is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Ulysses Williams owned and operated B&B Fruit and Vegetable, and George Williams owned and operated Fresh Open Air Market. Both businesses were located in the Columbia area and were known to purchase SNAP benefits for cash and to allow the purchase of non-food items such as cigarettes and clothing using EBT cards.

Undercover operations revealed that Xavier Roedran Pinckney and Jamal Derwin Gaines manned the registers at the two stores. Individuals would come in to buy cigarettes or other low-priced items. Pinckney and Gaines would ring up the transactions for around \$80 to \$100, give the individual half and keep half. Both Williams defendants monitored these transactions and provided the cash to hand out.

Investigators compared average monthly redemptions at the two stores to the South Carolina average. B&B Fruit and Vegetable and Fresh Open Air Market's average monthly redemptions were around \$76,000 and \$94,000, respectively. For other stores of similar size located throughout South Carolina, the average was just over \$2,000 per month.

The total loss amount for the case is just over \$4,000,000.

The case was investigated by agents of the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Richland County Sheriff's Office. Assistant United States Attorney Winston D. Holliday, Jr., of the Columbia office is prosecuting the case.

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